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C O N F I D E N T I A L ZAGREB 000454

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/15/2014

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [HR](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES PRESIDENT MESIC'S PLANS TO VISIT MIDDLE EAST

REF: A. STATE 47980

[B](#). ZAGREB 71

[C](#). 03 ZAGREB 2646

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR RALPH FRANK: REASON: 1.5 (B) AND (D)

[1](#)1. (C) THE AMBASSADOR MET WITH PRESIDENT MESIC MARCH 12 TO DISCUSS THE PRESIDENT'S UPCOMING MIDDLE EAST TRIP AND DELIVER POINTS CONCERNING U.S. POLICY TOWARD SYRIA (REF A). MESIC DESCRIBED HIS THREE-COUNTRY TRIP, BEGINNING LATER THIS MONTH, INCLUDING STOPS IN QATAR, JORDAN, AND SYRIA. MESIC HAD TOLD US EARLIER OF HIS PLANS TO VISIT SYRIA -- FOR ABOUT SEVEN HOURS ON MARCH 20 -- AND REQUESTED ANY INFORMATION ON U.S. POLICY TOWARD THE ASSAD REGIME (REF B). HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION THAT WE HAD COME BACK TO HIM WITH A RATHER EXHAUSTIVE INVENTORY OF CONCERNS.

[1](#)2. (C) MESIC SAID HE SHARED MANY OF THE CONCERNS AND WOULD DISCUSS THEM DURING STOPS IN SYRIA AND JORDAN, WHERE HE EXPECTS TO MEET JORDAN'S KING ABDULLAH. IN PARTICULAR, MESIC SAID HE WOULD PRESS PRESIDENT ASSAD TO ACCEPT THE "REALITY OF ISRAEL" AND TO PUSH THE SYRIANS NOT TO SUPPORT RADICAL TERRORIST GROUPS. HE WOULD ALSO UNDERSCORE WITH THE SYRIAN REGIME THAT IT WOULD BE WISE TO COOPERATE WITH THE U.S. ON IRAQ, WHERE RECONSTRUCTION COULD PROVIDE SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR SYRIA.

[1](#)3. (C) THE PRIMARY REASON BEHIND THE VISIT TO SYRIA WILL BE TO DISCUSS THE OPERATIONS OF CROATIA'S STATE-OWNED OIL COMPANY, INA. THE COMPANY RECENTLY DISCOVERED OIL IN A CONCESSION IT HAS EAST OF DAMASCUS AND HAS A LARGE-SIZE STAFFING PRESENCE THERE. ACCORDING TO ONE CROATIAN OIL INDUSTRY EXPERT WHO WORKS IN THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE, THE SYRIA DISCOVERY IS INA'S LARGEST OVERSEAS TO DATE.

[1](#)4. (C) MESIC'S ENTOURAGE, AS IS THE CASE WITH MOST OF THE CROATIAN PRESIDENT'S OVERSEAS TRIPS, WILL BE FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON TRADE AND ECONOMIC ISSUES. IN QATAR, HE TOLD THE AMBASSADOR HE HOPES TO BOOST QATARI INTEREST IN FINANCING AN LNG FACILITY ON THE CROATIAN COAST.

MINIMIZE CONSIDERED

FRANK

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